

	<p>Illinois Small Business Development Center Network</p> <h1>WEEKLY CONNECTION</h1> <p>Entrepreneurship ~ Innovation ~ Technology</p>	
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"Professional Guidance for Business Growth"

July 13, 2015

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Spotlight on Success – American Hometown Services

For over 30 years, American Hometown Services, a minority owned business, has focused on residential, commercial and industrial cleaning and building maintenance. They also offer carpet/furniture cleaning, floor stripping and waxing, tile/grout cleaning, and hardwood floor refinishing. In 2005 American Hometown Services was certified in water/fire damage restoration, and mold remediation. The company is fully insured and bonded and earned an A+ rating from the Better Business Bureau.

Sam Johnson, owner of American Hometown Services, recently earned a government contract with the help of **Mary Turner, Director of the Central Illinois Procurement and Technical Assistance Center**. Mr. Johnson explained, "**Mary Turner**, helped us with getting our DUNS number, SAM registration and has helped us with Request for Proposals. It took us several attempts to win a government contract, but we were very pleased when they announced that we had won. All of our hard work had paid off. We've been working the contract since early July, 2014 and everything is going smoothly."

Learn more about American Hometown Services
at: <http://www.americanhometownservices.com/>

SBDC's In The News – Jumpstart Magazine

Recently an article featuring the Startup Scene in Geneva, IL was featured in JumpStart magazine. The SBDC's identified in this article are the Illinois SBDCs at Waubensee Community College and Elgin Community College. Harriet Parker and Sybil Ege both hold

client meetings and participate in events at 25N Coworking, which is featured in the article. Also Harriet and Sybil both serve on the 25N Coworking advisory board. Here's a link to the article:

<http://jumpstartmag.com/featured/city-profiles/startup-scene-emerges-in-geneva-illinois/>

Maximizing Neoserra – Neoserra User Guide & FAQ

Use the Neoserra User Guide on Center Connect or the FAQ section under "Help" in Neoserra to learn how to do various tasks. The User Guide has updated instructions on entering Change in Staff and Jobs Retained milestones. The link to the Neoserra section of Center Connect is below.

<http://www.illinois.gov/dceo/SmallBizAssistance/CenterConnect/Pages/Webcats.aspx>

Valued Resources – Tools for Managing Social Media

From *Inc.com*, 7/7/15; “. . . for small-business owners newer to social media marketing, the thought of throwing money at paid social might feel unnerving. And with the growing number of social networks, features, and possibilities, paid social isn't the only cost associated with social media marketing. It also costs time to create snackable content and execute a full-blown strategy. So what's the solution for a budget-conscious business? First, enlist the help of social media tools to tackle virtually every aspect of your social media marketing, from content to advertising to lead generation, social listening, analytics, and more. Second, keep those social efforts organized. Using a spreadsheet or custom [content promotion template](#) can ensure you're maximizing every opportunity.”

<http://www.inc.com/john-hall/7-free-tools-that-will-shave-hours-off-of-social-media-management.html?cid=em01015week28a>

Five Small Business Facts

The following Five Facts about Small Business have been provided by our friends at NewGround Publications. Don't forget the Illinois SBDC provides access to the English and Spanish version of several very high quality small business publications and guides on our website at [Publications and Business Guides](#).

Five Small Business Facts:

1. Access to small business financing hit its highest rate since the fourth quarter of 2012.
2. Over half of Americans either own or work for a small business.
3. 15 large lenders have the highest amounts in small business loans (over \$172 billion in the first quarter of 2015) but these loans make up *single-digit percentages* (average of 6 percent) of their portfolios. Small business loans by smaller lenders *equal a third or more* of their portfolios.
4. A fast-growing group of entrepreneurs is people over 50. Baby boomers (born 1946-1964) are twice as likely as millennials (born 1981-2000) to start a business. 10,000 baby boomers turn 65 every day.
5. 27 percent of small businesses owners have never had a business plan, 40 percent feel financially illiterate, and 66 percent want to know more about finances.

IESBGA News – Luman Award

Recently the Illinois Entrepreneurship and Small Business Growth Association (IESBGA) recognized the Illinois Small Business Development Center at the College of DuPage with the Roger Luman Program Excellence Award at this year's IESBGA Professional Development Conference in Normal, IL.

The Roger Luman Program Excellence Award recognizes outstanding programs developed by the Illinois Small Business Development Centers that meet a specific need that will provide an economic impact on businesses or in the community.

In the spirit of developing business growth, creating jobs that would help provide economic impact, the Illinois Small Business Development Center at the College of DuPage developed "Project CEO," a program designed to provide workforce education for women business owners.

The program was successful in providing strategic planning and the implementation tools to small businesses that will bring value added in the growth and development of the business owner's company and the community.

Business owners met in small groups, biweekly to attend the training workshops designed to help owners develop the skills to achieve a higher level of business success. Participants paid \$299 for the workshop series that was broken into four modules. The four modules led by business professionals were: Become a Profit Master; Build a Sales Organization; Implement Process Improvement and Develop Confidence in Contract Negotiation.

Upon completion of the series the business owners received a Certificate of Completion from the College of DuPage, Center for Entrepreneurship. Because of the success of the program, "Project CEO" is now a regular program offered in both the Spring and Fall workshop calendars for the College of DuPage, Center for Entrepreneurship.

Taking Your Business Global

Please see the information below on another Taking Your Business Global webinar conducted by the SBA Illinois District Office. This Webinar Series is designed to help small businesses build an international customer base.

Taking Your Business Global - Did you know that your business may have customers outside the US? Have you often asked how you can expand your businesses abroad?

On July 30, 2015 at 10:00 AM the Illinois District Office of the US Small Business Administration is hosting a webinar to introduce small businesses to International markets. By learning how to use our network of government resources to assist in exporting goods and services, your business can become a major player in the international marketplace.

The webinar will present information for your firms export readiness by providing an in-depth evaluation for market readiness in the global marketplace, training available to prepare entrance to foreign markets, and financial assistance to support participation in foreign markets.

This webinar is free of charge. You may register by contacting Stephen Konkle at 312-886-4208, or Stephen.konkle@sba.gov. The deadline for registration is July 27, 2015.

America's SBDC – Volunteers Needed in San Francisco



It's no secret the America's SBDC Professional Development & Education Conference Committee loves volunteers - in fact, we know we couldn't put on such a great conference without your help!

We are starting to recruit volunteer program moderators now for the 35th Annual America's SBDC Conference in San Francisco. The moderators play a crucial role in the overall success of the conference. Through volunteering to assist in moderating a workshop, you will ensure the workshop helps provide a meaningful experience for attendees.

Now that evaluations are entered on the conference app, volunteering as a moderator has never been easier! All you have to do is be sure the room is in order, introduce the presenter using the bio provided, do an attendee count, fill out a short paper survey regarding the workshop, remind attendees to complete an evaluation, and read off the ever-so-important certificate code. Return the workshop survey to the volunteer desk and you will be the recipient of a special gift just for volunteers! If there are any issues with the workshop, the Committee members will be available to solve them.

It's not too early to volunteer, so please visit this [link](#) and sign up. Thanks in advance for helping us put on a great conference! See you in San Francisco!

Network News and Moves – Last Chance

LAST CHANCE !!! IMPORTANT NOTICE !!!

All Illinois SBDCs, Illinois SBDC International Trade Centers, Illinois SBDC with TIES and Illinois PTACs,

June 30, 2015 marked the end of State Fiscal Year 2015, the end of the 3rd Quarter for the Federal Fiscal Year 2015, the completion of the first 6 months for the Illinois SBDC 2015 program year and the end of the program year 2015 for the Illinois PTAC Program. It is vital that each center compile ALL of its outstanding client information and make sure it is **ALL entered into Neoserra by close of business (COB), Monday, July 13, 2015**. These are very important reporting periods for our State and Federal stakeholders. It is extremely important that all of the center performance information is entered into Neoserra.

The information that needs to be entered into Neoserra by **COB TODAY** includes all new client profiles and client advising activity, all outstanding business advisor notes, all client milestones and any outstanding economic impact information, the required narrative reports and success story profiles. Please be sure to follow up with your clients and secure any outstanding economic impact verifications to ensure you receive credit for your efforts. Also, please don't forget to enter all of your program costs for Jan-June 2015 into the Grantee Reporting system (GRS).

Thank you for giving this important notice your utmost attention.

America's SBDC Network Connect

Please [CLICK HERE](#) to access the latest issue of [America's SBDC Network Connect Newsletter](#). In this edition you will find links to information about several resources and services exclusively available to you as a member center of America's SBDC. Check it out!

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The **WEEKLY CONNECTION** is distributed by the Illinois SBDC and DCEO Office of Entrepreneurship, Innovation & Technology each Monday to members of the DCEO Illinois SBDC Network to provide the service delivery partners with regular updates on small business issues, opportunities and resources. You may send any information to share with the Illinois SBDC Network to Tom.Becker@illinois.gov. Please feel free to forward this update to other interested resource providers and key stakeholders.

